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An Apology for the Methodists
by W. Mawer, Lincoln,

1810

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THE
EXAMINER EXAMINED,
OR AN
APOLOGY FOR THE METHODISTS;
BEING
AN ANSWER
TO
MR. NEESHAM'S EXAMINATION;
TOGETHER WITH
SOME FURTHER REMARKS ON
THE REVEREND MR. HETT'S LETTERS
TO LORD A, B, C, &c.

BY W. MAWER.

“ Prove all things ; hold fast that which is good.” PAUL.

“ Truth is great and will prevail.” APOC.

Lincoln,

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, BY W. BROOKE ;
AND SOLD IN LONDON BY T. BLANCHARD, 14 CITY-ROAD,
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1810.

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To the READER.

PREVIOUS to the Rev. Mr. Hett's Letters appearing in print, I had no intention of troubling the press; and if Mr. Neesham had not written his Examination, I certainly should not have trespassed upon the attention of the public a second time. But as the principal charges which the Rev. Mr. Hett and Mr. Neesham have brought against the Methodists, are unfounded in truth, I think it right that they should be controverted. However, if either of these gentlemen should essay to write again, I shall not consider myself bound to answer them; as I hope the public will be satisfied that all which has been advanced of any consequence against the Methodists, either by the one or the other, has been fully refuted by the Reply to the Rev. Mr. Hett, and the contents of this Pamphlet; which I trust will furnish the Reader with some information concerning the Methodists that he may not have had an opportunity of obtaining before. I am at the same time fully persuaded, although I have denominated this pamphlet an Apo-

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logy for the Methodists, that the consistently pious and scriptural conduct of any denomination of professing christians whatever, is the best apology that can be made for them, and worth all the apologies that have ever been written.

W. M.

ERRATA.

Page 34, line 23, for "operation" read *operations*.
35, 9, after "all" insert *the*.
40, 12, for "it" read *they*.

THE
EXAMINER EXAMINED,

&c.

TO MR. R. NEESHAM.

SIR,

AS you have done me the honor of examining my reply to the Rev. Mr. HETT, I shall take the liberty of examining your examination, and that the reader may form an accurate judgment of your veracity and integrity, in the cause which you have espoused, I must request him to compare the title page of your pamphlet which runs thus, "An Examination of Mr. W. MAWER'S Reply to the Rev. Mr. HETT'S Letters respecting Dissenting Teachers, containing a Scriptural Refutation of the Methodistic Pretensions to Supernatural Illumination, By R. NEESHAM," with an advertisement which made its appearance in the Lincoln Chronicle of the 1st of June last, "*By a Layman of Dunholm*," which "*Layman*" is well known to be no other person than the learned Mr. R. Neesham, of Dunholm, author of the above-mentioned examination,

* Mr. R. Neesham is Master of an Academy at Dunholm, near Lincoln.

The wonderfully promising advertisement referred to, is as follows :

Speedily will be Published.

**CLERICAL DERELICTION OF DUTY,
A GREATER EVIL TO SOCIETY**

**THAN THE
TOLERATION ACT ;**

**OR,
A SUPPLEMENT**

TO THE

Rev. W. HETT's HORNBOOK :

Containing Strictures upon his conduct in permitting a Dissenting Meeting-house to continue, under the authority of a Licence, *surreptitiously* obtained, in the Parish of which he is Vicar.

By a LAYMAN of Dunholm.

" Wide was his parish, and houses far asunder,
But he ne left nought for no-rain, ne thunder
In sicknesse and in mischief to visite
The ferrest in his parish mocke and lite
Upon his fete, and in his hand a staf ;
This noble ensample to his shap he yaf,
That first he wrought and afterward he taught,
Out of the Gospel he the wordes caught
And this figure he added yet thereto,
That if gold ruste, what would iron do ;
For if a Preeft be foule on whom we trust,
No wonder is a Jewed man to rust."

.. Chaucer's Parish-priest in the 14th century."

—————" What a falling off."

SHAKESPEARE.

Appearances are very promising, but, Oh, Mr. Neesham, " what a falling off."

Pray Sir, may one be allowed to ask you, how it was that in June you should think of espousing the

cause of Dissenters, and in August, the cause of the Established Church ? Was it that you found the Rev. Gentleman “,who is delegated to superintend your spiritual concerns,” frowned upon your intended enterprise, and that you therefore thought it most prudent, to retire from an attack upon such high authority, lest by going too far, you should become obnoxious to his vindictive ire ? Or had you accidentally and unfortunately stepped into a “ conventicle” in the month of June, and got a little tinctured with Methodism, so that in the heat of your zeal and ‘enthusiasm,’ you determined to expose “ clerical dereliction of duty ?” But in August, finding your zeal a little abated, yet determined to write something, by which you might display your brilliant imagination, and shining talents ; you, in spite of all the remonstrances of the press, resolved to send your first production into the world, to support your worthy pastor, the Rev. Mr. Hett, in the good old cause of violent and inconsistent declamation against the Methodists. In behalf however of my understanding, you express yourself very feelingly, and as you have given unequivocal marks of compassion in your examination, I trust I shall feel equal sympathy for yours, and give as flattering evidences of it in the subsequent pages.

You inform your readers, that the “ Heathens agreed by common consent, to banish from their writings such gothic barbarisms” as you find in my reply. Two however of these “ gothic barbarisms,” which you charge me with, viz. *fool* and *lies*, are not to be

found in the reply, except by the eagle eye of Mr. Neesham. As to the patch work coat which was plainly intended, by the Rev. Mr. Hett, as a fool's coat for the Dissenters, it is safely lodged in the care of its ingenious maker, and there it will safely rest; unless you are disposed to borrow it, which should you do, whether it fit you or not, remember Mr. Hett is your tailor.

When any gentleman, however highly dignified he may be, whether by Reverend, M. A. or any other title, (which is often, like "the royal stamp, set upon base metal,") takes up his pen to publish to the world, disgraceful accusations, which have no foundation in truth, to the evident reproach of any body of people whatever, he most certainly deserves either a flat contradiction, or to be answered "according to his folly." However, as Mr. Neesham seems a little disquieted by what he calls "gothic barbarisms," we will collect from his "examination," a few highly refined christian-like words and sentences, which are as follow: "Snuffling broken-winded tones," "Bagdad barber," "Butler's bagpipes," "Billingsgate tropes," "dogma of the conventicle," "incantations of enthusiasm," "old methodistic stratagems," "infernal mists," "the devil let loose," "pranks of bob-major devils," "tarquinian devils," &c.—This little collection of Mr. Neesham's most pure and sublime phrases, will convince the reader, how very closely he has attended to the precept which he has quoted for my instruction—"If any man take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also."

In the introductory part of your Examination, you present your readers with a comment on liberty of conscience ; by which they are given to understand that “ Liberty of conscience, in its legitimate sense,” (I suppose you mean in its native and true sense) “ is the liberty of possessing our own private opinions :”—a most excellent exposition indeed ! and worthy of its author. And is this all, sir ? are your readers to understand that the right of private judgment in religious matters, without any authority whatever to speak or act in conformity with such judgment, is all that is meant by liberty of conscience ? then, sir, we do not thank you for it ; this liberty has always been enjoyed in every age and nation under heaven ; the holy apostles, ministers, and disciples of old, in the first ages of the christian church might have enjoyed such liberty of conscience as this without ever exposing themselves to perils, or stripes, or prisons, or death, together with the almost overwhelming flood of persecution which came upon the christian church ; and had they been content with it, thousands of jews who were converted to christianity by the united labours of the apostles and their helpers would have remained jews still, saying, “ we have Abraham to our father ” ; and tens of thousands of Greeks would have remained heathens still, worshippers of an “ unknown god.” Shall we descend to times approaching nearer our own, and enquire were the views of our pious and learned reformers on liberty of conscience, consonant with Mr. Neesham’s ? —Had such indeed been the views of those venerable men, then would protestanism have remained unknown in this our highly-favoured nation ;

the days of monkish darkness and ignorance would have descended even unto us ; we might to this day have been counting our beads, attending masses, prostrating ourselves before images, and purchasing pardons at the hands of the priests. Indeed when I find the learned Mr. Neesham of Dunholm, thus explaining away the true sense of liberty of conscience, and his worthy pastor the Rev. Mr. Hett nibbling at the toleration act, by suggesting to parliament certain alterations and infringements, I find my imagination bearing me back again to the former ages of bloody persecution ; my ears are saluted with the rattling of chains ; my smell with the stench of noisome prisons ; my eyes with the most horrid inquisitions, by which multitudes of the best of men (for no other reason than that of preaching the pure gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ) were fastened to the stake and burnt to ashes, or were compelled to submit to the crimson block that their venerable heads might be severed from their bodies ; it is, sir, to those days of painful memory that your "legitimate sense" of liberty of conscience, together with Mr. Hett's notions of toleration, would miserably restore us. To answer the vagrant insinuation that the methodists are disaffected to government, which has been answered so repeatedly, is like marching over the old field, and "slaying the ten times slain."†

On the ninth page of your Examination, a very ponderous charge is brought against me for retorting

† What Mr. Neesham has discovered in the 19th chapter of the book of Judges, which is applicable to this subject, I really cannot tell : he certainly must have been a very attentive reader.

against your minister; "concerning whose qualifications for that office, no one you presume acquainted with him, can entertain a moment's doubt." O, yes Sir, the Layman of Dunholm has had the audacity to attempt "strictures upon his conduct," and to insinuate that he has been guilty of "clerical dereliction of duty." Notwithstanding what the Layman of Dunholm has said, Mr. Neesham is of opinion, that what has been said in the reply, against that peaceable gentleman, the Rev. Mr. Hett, has been said "without any provocation whatever," merely, because he does not subscribe to the Methodist "creed."

Mr. Hett, sir, was never invited to subscribe to the Methodist "creed;" he might have enjoyed his own creed unmolested by me, to the end of his days, had he let the Methodists alone. But if the Rev. Mr. Hett's letters to the Right Hon. Lord A. B. C. &c. are a summary of his creed, it is certainly one of the most extraordinary confessions of faith, (for that is the meaning of the word creed) that ever the world was presented with. To drive away the spleen from our mind, suppose we just take a transient view of the leading articles of this astonishing creed.

1st. "From what I have myself known and read, I am thoroughly convinced in my own mind, of the restless and insatiable disposition of Dissenters."

Page 13th, Mr. Hett's Letters,

2nd. "That they (the dissenting teachers) be effectually prevented from doing any injury to the con-

stitution, in church and state, as by law established."

Vide page 6.

3rd. "That a silly boy, an idle, ignorant, profligate mechanic, or day-labourer, without any religious information, or any attachment to what is good, after gabbling over an oath or two, is empowered to sally forth in quest of spiritual adventures; and if he be inspired, as he may have the vanity to suppose, he cannot possibly be inspired by any thing, except, a superabundant stock of ignorance and impudence."

Vide page 19.

4th. "Since that time, (viz. when the Toleration act passed) an abundant crop of Protestant Dissenters from the Church Establishment, of various kinds and discordant principles, have sprung up, and are daily springing up among us, too many of whom I am sorry to say, how much or how little soever they may differ from the established church, or from one another in a variety of circumstances, are of the same mind in one, that is, an unfriendly disposition towards the constitution in church and state as by law established, and an unremitted and incessant endeavour to obtrude into it, their own changes and amendments, at least, if not utterly, to overthrow and destroy it."

Vide page 10.

Mr. Hett next wishes an act to be passed as follows :

5th. "If any Dissenter, whether a Minister or a Schoolmaster,* or one of the people, shall hereafter,

* Let the Layman of Dunholm, take good heed to his words.

knowingly and wilfully, either directly or indirectly, by writing, by word of mouth, or by any overt act whatever, say or do any thing either privately or publicly, that shall in any way bring into disrepute, or endanger the constitution in church or state, as by law established, or shall in the same manner, or by the same means, disparage, or lower the character of the regular clergy, as a body of men, or of any individual minister of the church establishment, he, she, or they, shall upon conviction of such offence, be liable to a certain punishment."

Vide page 14.

6th. "To be serious, it is high time my Lord, that these ignorant, these over-weaning gospel ministers, these evangelical teachers, as they are pleased to denominate themselves, by way of eminence, and with a view of disparaging the regular clergy, it is high time indeed my Lord, that these vain and self-conceited fanatics, should be put in mind of their own inferiority."

Vide page 41.

7th. "O my soul, come not thou into their secret, (viz. the secret of Methodists and Dissenters) unto their assembly, mine honor be not thou united, for in their ungovernable rage for innovation, they have trodden under foot the holy, the sacred word of God, and have substituted in its place, the word of John Bunyan, the word of an ignorant, a fallible, a sinful dreamer of dreams."

Vide page 56.

This sir, is a part of the very comfortable and conciliatory "*creed*" of that learned, and orthodox Pre-

bendary of Lincoln, and Vicar of Dunholm, "whose qualifications for the sacred office of a minister, no one who is acquainted with him, can entertain a moment's doubt." One would really think sir, that you and the Rev. Mr. Hett, had laid your heads together, to compose so divine and blessed a creed, had it not been for that unlucky advertisement of the 1st of June, by a "*Layman of Dunholm.*" So dull and illiterate am I, that I really should not have discovered a "*creed*" at all in the Rev. Mr. Hett's letters to Lord A. B. C. &c. had not you wisely given me the hint, by observing there was nothing for which I had an occasion to retort, except that he did not subscribe to my '*creed.*'

As a substantial proof, that this gentleman, together with all the clergymen of the established church, must necessarily be qualified for the christian ministry, we are very roundly and gravely informed, that, "it is an undeniable truth, that a candidate for holy orders, preparatory to his qualifications for, and induction into the established church, must have had from 800l. to 1000l. expended upon him in a course of scholastic studies, suitable to the dignity of his high office!"

This statement brings to my remembrance the following anecdote: "A young clergyman in America was lately boasting among his relations, of having been educated at two colleges. 'You remind me' said an aged divine present, 'of an instance I knew of a calf that sucked two cows,' 'What was the consequence?' said a third person, 'Why sir,' replied the old gentleman very gravely, 'the consequence was, that it was a *very great calf.*'"

That 800l. or 1000l. may have been expended in the scholastic studies (and that to great advantage) of several clergymen; I have no doubt; yet it is a well known fact, that there are thousands in the church, and who are in possession of good valuable livings too; whose "scholastic studies" never cost either them or their friends, 500l. Your next enquiry is, "Whether the ministers of the established church, can produce any presumptive evidence, that they really are the lawful successors of the apostles?" your answer to this question is, "unquestionably they can;" which you think you have fully proved, by a quotation "from an able writer;" and by satisfactory and conclusive evidence, found in the "authentic writings of the earliest fathers." You proceed, "If we descend still lower in the records of antiquity, the evidence to the point increases with the increase of christianity; that the claim of authority in the christian ministry, is as old as the religion itself, founded on the broad basis of regular succession; and deriving its origin from the immediate and solemn appointment of our Lord himself." We will proceed fir to examine these proofs; and that we may the better understand the subject, let us define terms. What then are we to understand by the word *Church*? The Church of England shall determine. "The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached; and the sacraments be duly ministered, according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

“As the church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred, so also the church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living, and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith.” Article 19th.

If this article be an acknowledged standard of the true meaning of the word *church*, then it will most certainly follow, that the christian church is not confined to any establishment, or national church whatever; because it is acknowledged that they “have erred, not only in their living, but also in matters of faith.” But as the true christian church is not confined to any establishment, so neither is it excluded from an establishment. For wherever there “is a congregation of faithful men, &c.” there is the true church of Christ, whether they be assembled in what is usually called a church, chapel, or meeting-house. And it will further follow from this article, that every true and faithful minister of Christ, whether in the established church or out of it, has an equal claim to lawful succession.

All pretensions to the exclusive right, which the ministers of the church of England claim, to be looked upon as the only lawful successors of the apostles, has been proved, and may be proved again, to be nugatory, and even preposterous; if any succession be proved at all, it must necessarily come down to us Protestants, through the medium of the church of Rome. For the church of England is no more than an established denomination of Dissenters from the church of Rome, in like manner as the different denominations of Dissenters are tolerated Dissenters from the established church of England. To

prove your point then fir, you must necessarily evince to us, that the Holy Father, the Pope of Rome, the Cardinals, Priests, &c. on the "broad basis of regular succession," were appointed by our Lord himself, to read masses, and sell indulgences. And who can for a moment doubt, but priests so divinely and regularly appointed to their office, were doing God's service, when they were encouraging even the grossest superstition and idolatry, and practising the most barefaced impositions on the poor deluded multitude!

Should your claim to succession be fully admitted, another inconvenience would as necessarily arise. You must know, fir, that several of the clergymen in the established church, hold Calvinistic tenets; and several others Arminian tenets; both which systems, you boldly affirm, "administer (by apologising for human depravity) to every guilty passion;" therefore, those ministers of the established church, whose "doctrines (you say) administer to every guilty passion," "are authorised by our Lord himself on the broad basis of regular succession." Again, if it should be acknowledged, that there are ungodly ministers in the established church, who convert their *sacred function* into a *lucrative trade*; then it will necessarily follow, from what you have advanced, that there are ungodly ministers, who convert their *sacred function* into a *lucrative trade*, appointed by our Lord himself; for ministers of the established church *you say*, "derive their authority from our Lord himself, on the broad basis of regular succession." These, fir, are the necessary consequences arising from the point which you "have humbly attempted to prove."

That there is a considerable number of learned and pious clergymen in the established church, I with pleasure admit, (and sincerely wish it may be abundantly increased) who derive their authority to preach the gospel from its divine author, but not on the "broad basis of regular succession" only, as you and some others have imagined. The Methodists and Dissenters make no such claims, but whenever you can substantiate yours, we shall very readily prove ours.

You give it as your opinion, on the 14th page of your Letters, that "every minister of the gospel properly so denominated, should certainly be able to convince the understanding of the divine origin, the incontrovertible integrity, and unquestionable authenticity of the christian scriptures." Qualifications like these are undoubtedly excellent. But if such qualifications are certainly necessary for every minister of the gospel, I am much afraid that thousands of clergymen in the established church will be found miserably wanting.

You seem quite confident however, that because the sacred scriptures were written and preserved in "languages which have long since ceased to be spoken, and connected with the customs, manners and opinions of a remote age and country, conversant with an ancient people, ancient events, and ancient politics," the methodist preachers cannot understand them. What you so justly say concerning the framers of the liturgy and articles of the established

church, may doubtless be said with equal truth concerning the translators of the sacred scriptures. "They were good, wise, and grave men." The sacred scriptures then are to be understood as they are handed down to us in the translation in which we usually read them, or they are not; for it is certain they cannot be understood and not understood at the same time and in the same sense. If you say they are not to be understood in the present translation, then do you in the most flagrant manner reproach either the learning or the piety of those worthy and venerable men, whom in another place you so highly honor. But if you allow that every doctrine, precept, and promise, which are essential to the salvation of men, may be understood by reading the Bible in the present translation, then you admit that for which we contend. In the sacred writings there are doubtless, particular passages, on which the most learned and pious are not exactly agreed. But, sir, all the Methodist Preachers are not tied down to the bare translation of the scriptures, several of whom can read them in the original languages; and even those who cannot, have access to the best expositors extant, together with many of the best writings on divinity, in the English language. The generality of Methodist Preachers, have many of the necessary means of information, and what is still more, a disposition to improve them.

One might be led to imagine from your statement of the case, that religion is one of the most abstruse and knotty subjects in the world, and that it is impossible it should be understood but by men of the most

profound learning. Nothing can be more manifest than that the scriptures were written for plain men, and that all which is essential to salvation, is easy to be understood; *“so that he who runs may read,” “and a wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein.”* The principal reason why men do not understand the sacred scriptures, is, that they seldom or never read them. By multitudes both rich and poor, almost any idle publication is preferred before them. *“Search the scriptures”* saith our Saviour, *“for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.”*

For further light and evidence on this subject, I recommend to your careful and candid perusal, the homily of your own church on reading the holy scriptures, which you will doubtless consider of more weight than volumes written by Methodist Preachers; lest you should not have this ancient and valuable work by you, I will transcribe a few passages.

“There is no truth necessary for our justification and everlasting salvation but that is or may be drawn out of that fountain and well of truth.”

“Let us diligently search for the well of life in the books of the new and old testament, and not run to the sinking puddles of men’s traditions.”

“And as Saint Chrysostom saith, He that is ignorant may there learn and have knowledge.”

“He that is wounded by the devil unto death, shall find there medicine whereby he may be restored again

unto health." " If it shall be required to teach any truth, or reprove false doctrine, to rebuke any vice, to commend any virtue, to give good counsel, to comfort or exhort, or to do anything requisite to salvation, all these things we may learn plentifully of the scripture ; It is a lantern to our feet."

" It giveth good counsel in all doubtful things, and in reading the word of God, he is not always most profited, that is most ready in turning over the book ; but he that is most turned into it, that is most inspired by the holy ghost."

" For, as St. Augustine saith, the knowledge of holy scripture is a great, large, and a high place, but the door is very low, so that the high and arrogant man cannot run in, but he must stoop low and humble himself that he shall enter into it ; therefore the humble man may search any truth boldly in the scripture without any danger of error."

" And the scripture is full, as well of low valleys, plain ways, and easy for every man to use and to walk in, as also of high hills and mountains which few men can climb unto."

" And in another place, Chrysostom saith, that man's human and worldly wisdom or science is not needful to the understanding of scripture ; but the revelation of the holy ghost, who inspireth the true meaning unto them that, with humility and diligence, do search therefore."

“Also many things in the scripture be spoken in obscure mysteries ; yet there is nothing spoken under dark mysteries in one place, but the self-same thing in other places is spoken more familiarly and plainly, to the capacity both of learned and unlearned.”

Vide Homily on reading of the holy scriptures.

“A certain learned subtle philosopher, who being an extreme adversary to Christ and his doctrine, could by no kind of learning be converted to the faith, but was able to withstand all the arguments brought against him with little or no labour. At length there started up a poor simple man of small wit and less knowledge, one that was reputed among the learned as an idiot ; and he in God’s name would needs take in hand to dispute with this profound philosopher. The bishops and other learned men standing by, were marvelously abashed at the matter, thinking that by his doings they should all be confounded and put to open shame : however, he goeth on ; and beginning in the name of the Lord Jesus, brought the philosopher to such point in the end, contrary to all men’s expectations, that he could not chuse but acknowledge the power of God in his words, and to give place to the truth.* Was not this a miraculous work,” continues the homily, “that one silly soul of no learning should do that which many bishops of great knowledge and understanding were not able to bring to pass ? So true is the saying of Bede, when the holy ghost doth instruct and teach, there is no delay at all in learning.”

Vide Homily for whit-sunday.

* What a pity but Mr. Needham’s sceptical Philosopher had been there.

Mr. Neeham will do well to observe, that the pious authors of these Homilies were speaking of the scriptures in a translation, and certainly there can be little danger in reading them in such a translation as ours, which, although it may have its defects, is acknowledged to be a good one.

It has been allowed by some of the first critics that the sense in which a common man of ordinary capacity would understand most passages of scripture, is generally the true sense of them. That the knowledge of the dead languages, history, chronology, &c. &c. have their use, is what the Methodists never have denied. And fir, the Methodists can boast of men, as generally and as deeply acquainted with these and other branches of literature, as most of the regular clergy. Although infidel philosophers, so called, are not scarce, yet they are not often found in churches and chapels; these are places which they seldom trouble with their attendance; but should they occasionally be found there, I am well persuaded that the ordinary discourses delivered by the Methodist Preachers, are as well calculated to produce conviction even in the mind of a *Sceptic*, as the discourses which are ordinarily read by the regular clergy in their parish churches. As those sceptical gentlemen live in the constant habit of resisting the Spirit of God, (without which there can be no divine conviction) human learning alone can be expected to do but little in this business. Ninety-nine out of a hundred of those persons who attend public worship, either in churches or chapels,

profess to believe the authenticity of the sacred scriptures. The work of a minister then is not so much to convince his hearers of the authenticity of the scriptures, as to convince them (under the divine influences of the holy spirit) of the vast importance of those truths, which the scriptures contain, and how deeply they are individually concerned in them. A minister of the gospel, either in the established church or out of it, has principally to do with such plain doctrines as the fall of man, and the universal depravity of human nature, as it is made manifest in the darkness of the understanding, the irregularity and violence of the passions, together with all the crying crimes, and most flagrant wickedness of mankind—the total inability of man to change his own heart, or reform his life, without the supernatural aids of the holy spirit;—to set forth the amazing love of God in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, together with the abundant gifts of the Holy Ghost;—The necessity of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, producing their genuine fruits, love to God and all mankind, which are uniformly evidenced by acts of piety towards God, and good will towards our neighbour.—Also the certainty of death and judgment, together with the faithful distribution of rewards and punishments. Let him explain and enforce these fundamental doctrines and duties, in all their branches and bearings, with becoming zeal and divine fervour, applying them to every one as he hath need, and that personally, even as Nathan said unto David,

“thou art the Man.” Let him give full proof that he feels the importance of these truths, by a corresponding life of genuine piety, and I will venture to affirm, that infidels will never grow up under his ministry.

These, fir, are a summary of the doctrines which are understood, believed, and taught by the Methodist Preachers, in what you call a “conventicle;” and fir, it is the preaching of these scripture doctrines in the manner and spirit above described, which occasions these “conventicles” to be so frequently crowded with attentive hearers, while (for want of such doctrines being preached in such a manner) numbers of churches are grievously neglected. It is not so much for want of learning in ministers, either in the church or among Dissenters, that infidelity springs up, and wickedness prevails, but for the want of *true apostolic piety and zeal* (which is too manifest to be disputed) in numbers of those who undertake the most solemn charge of immortal souls. As ignorant and as profligate as a large portion of mankind evidently are, and although they do not know exactly what a minister should be, (who is in many cases abundantly paid for superintending their spiritual concerns) yet they very well know what he should not be. And here fir, suffer me to speak plainly, the irregular (not to say profligate lives of many of the clergy, have been the cause of more infidelity, than the supposed ignorance of all the Methodist Preachers put together.

But it is highly probable fir, that you will by this time become weary of being tied down so closely to

scripture doctrines and plain facts, and begin to look out for something more amusing. You have told us on the 33rd page of your Examination, when speaking of Dr. Priestley, that it would be very amusing to know why the "religious illuminati shunned this important conflict;" (meaning a controversy with the Doctor) and as so very slender a circumstance will amuse you sir, you certainly shall be amused. Dr. Priestley was answered by Mr. Joseph Benson, in a work entitled "*Remarks on Dr. Priestley's System of Materialism and Necessity.*" The Methodists neither approve of the religious nor political principles of Dr. Priestley; which is sufficiently manifest from their writings. The Doctor was a great philosopher, and not without some scientific excellencies well known to the world; but what have the Methodists to do with him? Surely nothing can be more evident than that you and Mr. Hett wanted a subject to fill up your pamphlets, or an avenue through which to vent your malevolence against the Methodists, otherwise you never would have introduced Dr. Priestley; for you will recollect it was not I who first mentioned the name of Dr. Priestley, but Mr. Hett, and you have followed his worthy example by childishly introducing him a second time.

On the 16th page of your Examination you ask another question of the same import, and it is another proof of your extreme ignorance of the subject on which you are so very confident as to make an hasty challenge. "Did any one Methodist Preacher, or any one member in the Wesleyan connection reply to

Paine's Age of Reason and Rights of Man ?" "I challenge you explicitly as a man to declare to the world if any one in the whole Wesleyan connection ever took up his pen to defend our nation's pride and boast, a religion descended from heaven, &c." "Where were your conventicle luminaries, your oxen &c.?" To carry on your figure sir, our "*luminaries*" were lighted up, and our "*oxen*" hard at work. Paine was answered by two of our Preachers, and not contemptibly neither. One of the answers was written by Mr. Taylor, and the other by Mr. Suter. And pray sir, with how many answers to Paine did thirty thousand clergymen supply the world? As a further proof that the body of Methodists most cordially detest and hold in utter abhorrence the writings of that abandoned author, the work which you very justly speak so highly of (*Bishop Watson's Apology for the Bible*) was inserted in the Methodist Magazine and circulated through the kingdom. And if one may believe you, neither the Bishop nor the Methodists need ever write again on that important subject, for you say "a perpetual barrier is erected between the divine code of our belief and the wiles of Satan." I am very much inclined to think sir, that this subject in which you seem so greatly to exult, instead of procuring for you the palm of credit, victory, and triumph, which you expected from your readers, will only sink you in their estimation, by more fully convincing them of your profound ignorance of the Methodists, whose political and religious principles you have undertaken so unjustly to traduce.*

* The slanderous and vile insinuations which may be found in the Rev. Mr. Hett's Letters, and Mr. Neesham's Examination, deserve the execration of

After mentioning the names of Bishops Watson and Horne, (whose names, and some of their writings the Methodists venerate) you tell your readers that I have called them "useless Doctors," and that I have placed them in "competition with an ignorant, unlettered Methodist Preacher."

Sir, it is a worthless misrepresentation, and a palpable subversion of truth. The words "useless Doctor" are not to be found in the reply. What comes nearest them, may be found in the 17th page. Speaking of the Methodist Preachers, I tell Mr. Hett, that "I am much afraid, that what has been said concerning the labours and usefulness of those men whom you so much contemn, as ignorant and vain, cannot be

every honest man who is a lover of truth. The Methodists have both privately and publicly, and repeatedly, asserted in the plainest manner, their firm attachment to the person of his present Majesty, and the form of government established in this kingdom. They have a rule in one of their Minutes of Conference expressly to the point. "That no person in their Society, shall either in writing or conversation, speak lightly or irreverently of the government under which he lives." There may be individuals among them, as well as other denominations, who may wish for a limited reform of some apparent political abuses, but is that a proof of disaffection? If so, then we are in a miserable condition indeed, for half the members of the established church will be found disaffected. Let these gentlemen take a retrospective view of the mobs and riots which have made their appearance in different parts of this country within the last fifty years, and examine the individuals of which they were composed. In their flagrant acts of disorder and violence, were they headed by *Methodist Preachers*? Or were the inferior members of their *Societies* found among the lawless rabble? No, if they had, they would have been expelled, as unworthy of a name in the connexion! The Methodist Preachers in the strongest manner, recommend loyalty and good order wherever they go—These are notorious facts, and they challenge the Rev. Mr. Hett and Mr. Neesham, and all the clergymen in the kingdom, to prove that the Methodists, as a body, are unfriendly to government.—The word *Methodist*, properly applies to the connexion of the late Rev. John Wesley exclusively.

saïd with truth of many learned Doctors of Divinity who receive from 500l. to 1000l. per annum." And in this sentence it is to be lamented there is too much truth. But fir, is this saying what you have charged me with on the 15th page of your Examination? Are all those gentlemen in the church who have D. D. fixed at the end of their names, Watsons or Hornes? I would they were. Then would there probably be less need of Methodist Preachers.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

WILLIAM MAWER.

Lincoln,
November 12, 1810.

LETTER II.

SIR,

ON the 20th page of your Examination you have introduced a quotation from Dr. Herbert Marsh, which you state to be a "very correct exposition of the theological learning of the Methodists."

"A numerous sect of christians in this country have a much more easy and expeditious mode of studying divinity; no literary apparatus is there necessary either for the interpretation of the bible or the elucidation of its doctrines; inward sensation supplies the place of outward argument, divine communication supercedes theological learning." Let the Doctor prove his assertion if he can. Such a sentiment is highly erroneous. Neither the Methodists nor any other sect that I am acquainted with, think so lightly of theological learning. But if the Doctor thinks that "*outward argument*" and "*theological learning*," supercede the ordinary aids of the holy spirit, we beg leave to retire and leave him to his "*literary apparatus*," until he finds out his error. You add, "your reply is corroborative of these definitions of the Wesleyan system, for you virtually maintain, that, in the qualifications of a christian minister, ignorance is superior to learning, and folly paramount to wisdom." If you really understand me so, it is more than "*corroborative*" that you are not likely to be renowned for your "*wisdom*." You certainly have not a pupil in your Academy, ten years of age, that would so grossly have misunderstood the sentiments of the Reply.

Hence we are conducted to your learned and zealous vindication of the Rev. Mr. Hett's theory of the doctrine of divine inspiration, and what you call a "*scriptural refutation of the methodistic pretensions to supernatural illumination.*" And that the reader may have a correct view of the subject, the Rev. Mr. Hett's proposition shall be adduced. "Should these travelling preachers and their advocates fancy, as some of them have publicly asserted, that they are inspired after the manner of the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; when they shall have given proof of this inspiration by the working of miracles, then, and not till then, will their pretensions be credited." Are we not to understand, from this proposition, that working miracles is the only proof of divine inspiration? for Mr. Hett affirms that "then (that is when miracles are wrought) and not till then, will their pretensions be credited." You will observe, that no distinction is here made by Mr. Hett, between the ordinary gifts of the holy spirit, which were, and still are common to all believers, and the extraordinary gifts, which were principally confined to the Apostles. He only speaks of the evidence of divine inspiration simply considered. It will be our business then to enquire whether there can or cannot be any other evidence produced of divine inspiration, besides that of working miracles. And for this purpose, I have no objection to that chapter in Corinthians, which you think I have so strangely misapplied in my Reply to Mr. Hett.

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same

Lord. And there are diversities of operations; but it is the same God which worketh all in all."

"But the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given, by the spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, by the same spirit; to another faith, by the same spirit; to another the gifts of healing, by the same spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues."

"And God hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then gifts of healing, helps in governments, diversities of tongues." 1 Cor. XII.

The Apostle proceeds (after having mentioned these various gifts and operations of the spirit) to enquire, *"Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?"* These various interrogatories convey to the mind a plain negative as though the apostle had said no, surely not. For as there are *"diversities of gifts, diversities of administrations, and diversities of operations,"* so also there are diversities of evidences, all proving one point—*divine inspiration*. Some give evidence of it by prophesying, some by teaching, some by working miracles, some by healing, some by speaking in different tongues, and some by interpreting tongues.

Thus have I demonstrated, or rather the apostle has demonstrated for me, (for indeed little remains to be

done when the apostle is so very explicit) that there were different evidences even of the extraordinary influences of the holy spirit, according to the different kinds of gifts which were given to different individuals. But there were other evidences of divine inspiration, which do not come under the denomination either of miraculous or extraordinary gifts of the spirit; but were common to all believers as well as the apostles. *"The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law."* Gal. v. 22, 23. Now if these are the fruits of the spirit, then are they evidences of divine inspiration wherever they are found: and hence there may be divine inspiration where there is not the power to work miracles.—But if after all the Rev. Mr. Hett will not admit of any satisfactory evidence of divine inspiration, but that of working miracles, then, according to his notion, it must necessarily follow in the very nature of things, and cannot possibly be otherwise, that if he, the Rev. Mr. Hett, did not work miracles when he professed to the Bishop that he trusted he was moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon him the office of a Minister, there is every possible reason to believe that he was much more strongly moved by the expectation of obtaining a good profitable living in the church, than with a sincere and fervent desire to save immortal souls. And Mr. Hett will do well, honestly and closely, to interrogate his own conscience on this important point. If this is not a fair inference from that Reverend gentleman's declaration, above recited, he must then necessarily stand chargeable with the guilt of attempting to make the methodist preach-

ers appear ridiculous and contemptible, by insinuating to the world, that they profess or fancy themselves inspired with power to work miracles, than which nothing can be further from the truth. The methodist preachers might, with equal justice and propriety, proclaim to the inhabitants of Lincoln, that the Rev. Mr. Hett fancies himself inspired with power to work miracles every time he does duty in the Cathedral-church. And in such a "*sacred edifice*," by such a *qualified minister*, who would wonder to see them performed !

The Methodist Preachers no more "*fancy*" themselves "*inspired*" with power to work miracles, after the manner of the apostles, than they "*fancy*" themselves "*inspired*," so as to thunder after the manner of Jupiter, or to perform all the astonishing exploits of the heathen deities. And of this Mr. Hett and you sir, cannot possibly be ignorant.

As to your borrowed comment on the 12th of Corinthians, it proves nothing, except that you set about a work in great haste, which you evidently did not understand ; I never saw the extraordinary or miraculous gifts of the spirit so confounded with its ordinary operation by any writer. We have no occasion to go to the 13th chapter for an explanation of the 12th, the apostle is quite explicit on the subject of that chapter. We are perfectly satisfied without any such comparison, that "it evidently appears, that the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, were intended only for transient and temporary continuance." But we cannot believe with you, that "It is also notorious, from every authentic record, connected with ecclesiastical history, that su-

pernatural illumination ceased with the lives of the immediate successors of the apostles," because it has not yet been proved. Pray what is the meaning of those words with which you and some other writers of the age seem so wonderfully pleased, that you drag them into almost every page, (*supernatural illumination and inward sensation.*) Can there possibly be any divine "*illumination*" which is not "*supernatural*?" Are not all divine operations of the spirit of God "*supernatural*?" That is, above nature, or what is not effected in the ordinary course of nature?—All divine illumination is supernatural, and therefore it will follow of necessity, that if "*supernatural illumination*" has ceased, all the divine influences of the spirit of God on the heart of man have ceased, together with all the consequences which necessarily follow from such a conclusion.

I before observed, that the Methodists never profess either in their writings or in their pulpits to be inspired, so as to work miracles. But they profess to believe in the ordinary influences of the divine spirit, rationally, and scripturally, and consistently, with the articles, homilies, and liturgy of the church of England. From whence I will proceed to make a few quotations.

"Works done before the grace of Christ" and the inspiration of his spirit, are not pleasant to God; forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ."

Vide Article 13.

"For it is the Holy Ghost, and no other thing that doth quicken the minds of men, stirring up good and

godly motions in their hearts, such as otherwise of their own crooked and perverse nature they should never have."

"Man of his own nature is fleshly and carnal, without any spark of goodness in him, without any virtuous or godly motions, only given to evil thoughts and wicked deeds. As for fruits of faith, charitable or godly motions, if he have any at all in him, they proceed only of the Holy Ghost."

Vide Homily on Whitsunday.

"God who, as at this time, didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by the sending to them the light of the holy spirit, grant us by the same spirit, to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort." *Vide Collect on Whitsunday.*

"For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Rom. viii. 14.

"For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man but the spirit God."

1st Cor. ii. 11.

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. ii. 14.

"Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his." Rom. viii. 9.

Quotations both from the Scriptures and the Homilies might be almost infinitely multiplied, but these are

sufficiently expressive of the opinions of the Methodists on the scriptural doctrine of divine inspiration, which you, and many others, take upon you so wickedly to burlesque with the epithets "supernatural and methodistical illumination," "inward sensation," "enthusiasm," &c.

In your second letter you inform your readers "Wesley was a mystic, and that the same *ignis fatuus* which tempted Fenelon, also attracted him to follow the ghost of De Renty;" and "that the devil hath in a strict literal sense been let loose among mankind in the eighteenth century of the christian æra." Very likely fir; and it is equally probable that you have met with this *devil*, and taken instructions from him how to proceed in the second letter of your examination.

You have made yourself remarkably merry with a few detached extracts from Mr. Wesley's Journals, where he speaks of the great persecution which he met with when preaching (not "a new religion that was authenticated by the introduction of devils," as you have affirmed, but an old one) the pure gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

On the subject of persecution, Mr. Wesley expresses himself, according to your quotations, as follows:—

"the devil knew his kingdom shook, and therefore stirred up his servants to ring bells and make all the noise they could;" "the devil's children fought valiantly for their master, and many stones fell on my right hand and on my left." "Some other of the

children of Belial, had laboured to disturb us several nights before." These short detached extracts, together with a few more concerning some particular temptations, which Mr. Wesley mentions, transport you beyond measure, and like an "*ignis fatuus*" lead you to the "*Cock-lane Ghost*," "*Bob-major devils*," "*Imps of the antichamber*, &c."

As you seem to take much delight in quotations, where the word "*devil*" is mentioned, to exalt your joy, and increase your happiness, I will indulge you with two or three from the Homilies of your own church, which, (as the authors of them were not under the influence of any "*ignis fatuus*") may yield you increased pleasure.

"Christ destroyed the *devil* and all his tyranny."

"He died to destroy the rule of the *devil* in us."

"Thus (good christian people) ye have heard how that he hath overcome the *devil*,"

Vide Homily on the Resurrection.

"For the *devil* will essay to attempt all things."

Vide Homily on Matrimony.

"And the rebels themselves are the very figures of *fiends* and *devils*, and their captain the ungracious pattern of *Lucifer* and *Satan*."

Vide Homily against Rebellion.

I could produce from the same source numbers of similar sentences, but I acknowledge I do not feel the same pleasant emotions that you happily experienced, in making quotations from the journals. Your merry

observations and unchaste insinuations, are only indicative of an impure mind, and lewd imaginations, and shew that you can laugh at persecution, and sport with temptation. Excellent qualifications indeed, for a writer on subjects of divinity. I suppose you never read of the devil taking our Lord and setting him on a "*pinnacle of the temple*," nor of "*the messenger of Satan, to buffet*" Paul, nor of "*the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience*," for if you had, there can be no doubt but your volatile imagination would at once have transported you to a "brick-bat battle," or a "Cock-lane Ghost." These are poor efforts Mr. Neesham, to support your worthy Vicar, and refute the Methodists.

You next complain of "much harmony" being "interrupted" by a "Brother Burditt of Olney." Your "Brother Burditt," sir, is not a Methodist. "Henry Parkins's" name is not to be found on the Methodist minutes. "Memoirs of a Female Vagrant, recently published," were not "ushered into the world under the patronage of Methodists;" query, were they not think you, "ushered into the world," by Mr. Neesham of Dunholm? quite as likely. As his comment upon them is so truly excellent.

On the 38th page of the Examination we are told, "That the general doctrines taught at the conventicle in the alluring form of evangelical preaching, have a tendency to blind the understanding, and sanction every propensity to moral turpitude, is very evident; and is a natural consequence resulting from the unscriptu-

ral doctrines of instantaneous conversion and sinless perfection."

You proceed, "This is not mere declamation, and I presume sir, you will not have the hardihood to controvert my assertion." You think yourself upon safe ground then I presume; however, as you do not seem to have examined it very minutely, I will proceed to examine it for you. Pray what are we to understand by "*evangelical preaching*"? If the sentiments contained in the above quotation, and some other parts of your examination, may be taken for an answer to this plain question, and if it be a fair sample of your information on the subject, you must really submit sir, with all your learning, to be put on the list with the Rev. Mr. Hett's unlettered local preachers, "who do not know the use of a common english dictionary."—Evangelical preaching, sir, is the preaching of those doctrines which are found in the writings of the four Evangelists, together with the epistles of the holy apostles; which in the most plain and pointed manner, set forth justification by faith, through the righteousness and blood-shedding of our Lord Jesus Christ, agreeably with the doctrines of your own church. "He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel." See also Article the 11th, 12th, 13th, and 18th. Homily 3rd on salvation, and 4th on true and living faith.—If the limits of this pamphlet would allow it, I could furnish you with an hundred quotations directly to the point.—The words "sinless perfection," Mr. Wesley never used in any of his writings as his own words. The

methodists believe in the scriptural doctrine of christian perfection; by which is meant nothing more than an advanced state of grace, in which the believer is enabled to love God with all his heart, mind, soul, and strength, and his neighbour as himself; which is the very perfection that Mr. Neesham prays for whenever he attends divine service in the established church. "Wherefore I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me with a pure heart and humble voice." "Wherefore let us beseech him to grant us true repentance and his holy spirit, that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy."

Vide Order of Morning Prayer.

"Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open and all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy holy spirit, that we may perfectly love thee and worthily magnify thy holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen." Vide Communion Collect.

These quotations fully express or imply all that the Methodists intend by christian perfection. The scriptural doctrines of justification by faith, or "instantaneous conversion," and christian perfection, can no more "strike at the root of repentance," or any other experimental or practical branch of true religion, than the upper stories of a building "strike" at the foundation; or than the higher branches of the mathematics "strike at the root" of the four first rules of arithmetic.

You are certainly one of the rarest divines that I ever met with. It is a great pity sir, but you had gone

to a methodist "*conventicle*," or any other "*conventicle*," where you might have obtained a better knowledge of your own doctrines. As meanly as you think of the methodist preachers, you would not pass, I assure you, in the very lowest rank. The Reverend Mr. Hett may perhaps admit you on the list of his "*Hedge-Doctors*."

"From such Apostles, Oh ye mitred heads,
Preserve the church! and lay not careless hands
On sculls, that cannot teach and will not learn." *

In your last letter you fall in with "Count Swedenborg," who you say "in one of his journeys to the other world informs us, that he met with John Calvin in a very piteous plight, suffering for his unrighteous positions concerning predestination." As this certainly cannot be mended, I shall leave it; only observing, that when Mr. Neesham finds it convenient to lampoon a good man, he has no objection even to the wild reveries of "Count Swedenborg." I observed in my reply to the Rev. Mr. Hett, that I was not a Calvinist. I shall therefore write no apology for them as you have suggested. But what you have written against them, brings to my mind what the learned Dr. Watts has said in his preface to his *Philosophy*, "the speediest way to full assurance in any point, is to read only one side of the question." This has evidently been your way of examining controverted points in theology, hence you hastily jump at conclusions. Your pompous pretensions to an acquaintance with the *Fathers*, will have but little weight, I presume, with the more judicious part of your readers.

* That cannot teach and will not learn Divinity.

You tell us that you “presume not to sit in judgment upon any man’s creed, but that it is your own you are bound to defend.” And immediately with your usual consistency, you say, “I shall proceed not by furiously tearing down the props of your *hypothetical religion*, but by making them dissolve peaceably in their own weakness.” As to our *religion*, which we think is the *religion* of the bible, it has already stood many far hotter fires than Mr. Neesham is able to light up; therefore, it is not likely to be *dissolved* by his warm embers. But like a mistaken friend, or a whitewashed enemy, he has unhappily applied his lighted match to the fundamental doctrines of his own church. And if the Rev. Vicar does not call him to order about it, there will *then* be sufficient cause to complain of “clerical dereliction of duty.”

You have acknowledged yourself to be “an unworthy member” of the established church, and I believe from such an acknowledgement, there will be no *dissenters*. You certainly must be unworthy enough; so unworthy, that if you had been a member of the Methodist Society, you would have been turned out. When a man publicly denies, or explains away as you have done, two of the leading doctrines of the church to which he professedly belongs, he does not deserve the name, even of an “*unworthy member*.”—He ought to be cashiered, whether he be a minister or a private person.

The Methodists are pretty well acquainted with the doctrines of the established church, and to the major

part of them they have no objections. But when the pulpit quarrels with the desk, and the life of the minister is at variance with both ; they then beg leave to become Dissenters. Only let the ministers of the established church, faithfully preach the evangelical doctrines contained in the articles and homilies, and act in concord with them too, then will they be sure to have the Methodists for their hearers. And in such a case, if they themselves, should be called *Methodist Preachers*, it would give me no surprise.

“We venerate the man whose heart is warm,
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrines and whose life
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof,
That he is honest in the sacred cause.
To such we render more than mere respect,
Whose actions say, that they respect themselves.”

But we can never “venerate the man,” however learned, and dignified by worldly titles, who is

“Loose in morals, and in manners vain,”
“Ambitious of preferment for its gold.”

I would particularly recommend you Mr. Neesham, to read your Bible more : together, with the articles and homilies of your own church, for it is manifest that you know but little of their doctrines at present. And if you will not think it too “*Methodistical*” an employment, read Mr. Wesley’s four first volumes of sermons, and his appeal ; you will by so doing, obtain a better acquaintance with the Methodist doctrines which you so rashly reprobate. You may have studied

(for ought I know) but not divinity. At present you seem to be much better acquainted with the "*Arabian Nights*" than with theology; scraps of latin and quotations from reviews, together with an abundance of scurrility, can never supply the place of scriptural and rational evidence. Indeed your title page makes quite against you, for it might with as much propriety have been "a scriptural refutation" of the articles and homilies of the church of England, as what it is. So palpable a dissenter from the standard doctrines of the established church as you are, cannot be found in the whole Methodist connexion.

In fact, as to fixed principles, you seem to have none; you flatly contradict yourself. I will point out to the reader another inconsistency, and then conclude. Speaking of the wickedness of men, you say in page 43, "When they can fancy a God ready to forgive, and a Saviour to expiate every sin, what is to stop them." On the 46th page "the blood of Christ shed for our salvation, procured the grace of repentance for the whole world." Such inconsistency needs no exposition. So long as the Methodists have access to the articles and homilies, neither the Rev. Mr. Hett, nor Mr. Neesham, nor (it is a bold saying) any other minister or member of the established church, can ever take up his pen to write against that Society in matters of faith, without exposing himself to the severe buffetings of his own creed. I will further add on this occasion, I am not sorry that the Rev. Mr. Hett and Mr. Neesham, have

written against the Methodists, but am rather "happy (as St. Paul said to King Agrippa on another occasion) because I shall answer for myself." Truth never suffers by investigation, nor ultimately by opposition.

That highly respectable divine, Dr. Paley, has said, (speaking of the primitive christians) "After men became christians, much of their time was spent in prayer and devotion, in religious meetings, in celebrating the eucharist, in conferences, in exhortations, in preaching, in an affectionate intercourse with one another, and correspondence with other Societies. Perhaps their mode of life, in its form and habit, was not very unlike the *Unitas Fratrum*, or of modern *Methodists*."

Vide *Paley's Evidences of Christianity*.

Such an acknowledgement from the pen of a Methodist Preacher would pass for little; but from a minister of the established church, so highly esteemed for his learning and abilities, it is saying a great deal. Concerning Mr. Wesley it has thus been said by a clergyman, (*the Rev. John Fletcher*) whose acknowledged piety was perhaps equal to any that ever adorned the church of England;—

"Of the two greatest and most useful ministers I ever knew, one, (Mr. Whitfield) is no more. The other, (Mr. Wesley) after amazing labours, lies still with unwearied diligence through the three kingdoms, calling sinners to repentance, and to the healing fountain of Jesus's blood. Though oppressed with the weight of near seventy years, and the care of near thirty thousand souls, he shames still, by his unabated

zeal and immense labours, all the young ministers in England, perhaps in christendom. He has generally blown the gospel trumpet, and rode twenty miles before most of the professors who despise his labours have left their downy pillows. As he begins the day, the week, the year, so he concludes them; still intent upon extensive services for the glory of the redeemer, and the good of souls. And shall we lightly lift up our pens, our tongues, our hands against him? No, let them rather forget their cunning. If we will quarrel, can we find nobody to fall out with, but the minister upon whom God puts the greatest honour?"—Thus I conclude, wishing you sir, and the Rev. Mr. Hett, every blessing arising from a theoretical and experimental acquaintance with the doctrines of your own church.

I am Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

WILLIAM MAWER.

Lincoln,
November 21, 1810.

FINIS.

SECRET



